# 7 European views of a changing US–Japan alliance

## Declining prospects for "civilian power" cooperation?

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### European and Japanese responses to US hegemony

The resurgence of the United States's hegemonic "hard" and "soft" power since the mid-1990s, and the unrivalled hegemonic position and degree of freedom of international action that this has gifted to the United States, has posed major questions for its allies, let alone its foes, with regard to how to manage relations with the sole superpower (Krauss, Hughes and Blechinger-Talcott 2007). For the United States' allies, although difficulties were clearly emerging under the Clinton administration, it is the advent of the George W. Bush administration and the events post-September 11, 2001 that have thrown into sharpest relief the problems of potentially unbridled US hegemony, and the risks of the United States functioning more as a predatory than a benign hegemon. There has been speculation that the United States may in fact be proving to be the "world's dispensable nation" (Lind 2005), increasingly preoccupied with its own unilateralist, or even "military-imperial", agenda, and thus risking irrelevance in the eyes of other regions more intent on building common institutions (Johnson 2004). There are also indications that the United States' current "hyper-power" status (Malone and Khong 2003: 421–22) may prove transitory and limited, as revealed by the aftermath of the Iraq war, the continuing rise of China and India, and renewed power of Russia. Nevertheless, mainstream allied opinion in Europe and Asia still regards the United States' hegemonic presence as the essential underpinning force for the international system (Allin, Andréani, Errera and Samore 2007).

Indeed, it is notable that even in the United States the emphasis has been not upon evading alliance commitments, but on how to better activate alliance relationships to complement its attempts to restructure the post-Cold War international system. Hence, the principal challenge for US allies has been not to find ways to reject outright (at least not beyond the rhetorical level, or in the medium term) US hegemony and alliance ties. Instead, for allies the imperative has been to search for strategies to improve their management of US power and to address issues of bilateral or broader international concern where the United States occupies a central position; whether these relate to the response to threats of transnational terrorism and

weapons of mass destruction (WMD) post-September 11, political economy, or climate change. These strategies to manage US power may include the adjustment and strengthening of existing bilateral alliances ties in the security and economic domains; the strengthening of multilateral political, economic and security frameworks to defuse, dilute and deflect US power; and the fostering of regional ties in order to leverage the collective power of states against an over-mighty US (Krauss, Hughes and Blechinger-Talcott 2007).

Japan and Europe, as the two principal alliance partners that have facilitated US trans-Pacific and trans-Atlantic hegemony in the postwar period, have faced similar challenges in managing their respective alliance relationships with the United States, and especially since the start of the Bush presidency. Japan, as observed in other chapters of this book, faced with demands for an enhanced contribution to international security from its US ally post-September 11, and set against the context of the perception of its own economic decline and continued military limitations relative to a resurgent United States and a rising China, has responded by strongly re-adhering to US hegemony. Japan, first under the leadership of Prime Koizumi Junichirō, then Abe Shinzō, Fukuda Yasuo, and now under Asō Tarō, has invested its policy energy in strengthening bilateral security cooperation, thereby diffusing potential conflicts with the United States' evolving security strategy that increasingly seeks to utilize its regional allies and bases to respond more flexibly to regional and now global military contingencies (Hughes 2005). In the meantime, the United States, in identifying Japan as the key bastion for the maintenance of its military hegemony in East Asia vis-à-vis China, has largely subordinated economic to security ties, thereby alleviating the potential for economic conflict that has afflicted US ties with other states (Higgott 2004).

Japan's strengthening of bilateral alliance ties with the United States has not been unconditional and without hedging tactics, as shown by degrees of strategic divergence over North Korea; the minimalist Japan Self Defence Forces (JSDF) commitment in Iraq; and continued friction over the final settlement of the realignment of US bases in Japan (Hughes and Krauss 2007). Japan's temporary disengagement from the MSDF refuelling mission in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan at the end of 2007—the result of strong resistance from the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan arguing for a less US and more UN-centred security policy—was another example of residual Japanese reticence to overly engage with US global security priorities. Although, of course, in the end Japan's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) subsequently re-engaged with OEF with the passage of a new Replenishment Support Special Measures Law in January 2008.

Japanese policy-makers, despite their assertions that there is no fundamental incompatibility between bilateralism and multilateralism, are arguably aware that this strategy of re-strengthening ties with the hegemon carries opportunity costs in terms of limiting Japan's ability to engage in building regional multilateral security and political institutions that might help to constrain US power. Nevertheless, Japan's objective in the post-September 11

world has been to manage US hegemony chiefly through strengthened bilateralism in security, to portray itself as an indispensable ally, and through these means to hope to exert greater leverage over its ally's strategic orientation (Hughes 2008: 114–15).

Europe (defined here as the twenty seven European Union [EU] member states, but, as will be seen below, not always as necessarily coeval with the EU as an actor itself) has faced similar challenges to Japan in the face of often rampant US hegemony and unilateralism. Although the degree and finality of damage inflicted on the trans-Atlantic relationship should not be over-exaggerated as US–Europe relations still remain fundamentally strong in many security and economic aspects, disputes over trade, the global environment, and most prominently the Iraq war have certainly harmed ties. Europe—as is its wont as an actor of multiple identities, incorporating the EU as a collective actor, as well individual state diplomacies—has responded in different ways to the assertion of US hegemony. The EU on certain issues has collectively resisted the United States and utilized multilateral frameworks such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) (Yoshimatsu 2007), as in the case of trade friction over steel and genetically modified (GM) foods. On other issues, particularly Iraq, but also missile defence (MD), Europe has experienced "disaggregation" (Peterson 2004: 620–21) between (in former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's inaccurate phase) "Old and New Europe": the United Kingdom (UK) adhering to US hegemony; with France and Germany proving more obdurate in cooperating with US military "adventurism". The result has been a mix of cooperation and tension in US–Europe relations on a variety of levels, with the overall trend has perhaps being one of deterioration in trans-Atlantic ties, especially during the first term of the Bush administration; although relations have begun to recover in the latter stages of Bush's second term. This stands in sharp contrast to the general strengthening of US–Japan ties experienced in particular during the Koizumi administration, and might argue that Japan in the short term has been more successful than Europe in managing ties with the United States.

Japanese and European perceptions of and strategic responses to US hegemony post-September 11 clearly have much in common, because they stand as two important case studies that enhance comparative lessons for how key allies in different regions deal with US power on a range of political, economic and security issues. In addition, though, beyond the comparative aspect, Japanese and European responses to US hegemony have a common importance for understanding the management of US power because they are directly linked. This is due to the fact that Europe has often seen Japan as a key partner, with significant and compatible power resources, with which it can work in order to assist in the management of US hegemony, and the United States' perceived egregious tendencies towards serial bilateralism, "a la carte multilateralism" (Mack 2003; Berkofsky 2008: 25), and unilateralism. Hence, any move by Japan, as noted above, to strengthen its bilateral alliance with the United States and re-adhere firmly to US

hegemony, to the possible detriment of other multilateral or regional options, carries important implications for the ability of Europe to fully engage Japan as a partner to deal with US power. Hence, the Japan–Europe relationship is important for the foreign policy of the EU and its individual member states in dealing with US power, and may have a significant impact on the opportunities and limitations for cooperation amongst US allies to utilize multilateralism and regional cooperation in order to constrain US hegemony.

The task of this chapter, therefore, is to consider the impact of a strengthened US–Japan alliance upon Europe's attempts to utilize enhanced cooperation with Japan as a means to respond to US hegemony; the ways in which closer US–Japan ties impose limitations, but also perhaps provide opportunities for new interaction, on specific international policy issues that are often bones of contention amongst the United States, Japan and Europe; and, based on the Europe–Japan example, the wider ramifications for US allies in seeking to work in tandem to address US power.

The chapter is organized into three sections. The first considers in more detail definitions of Europe as an international actor; European perceptions of US hegemony and the current challenges that it presents to Europe itself and its preferred view of the structuring of the international system and appropriate responses to extant economic and security issues; and Europe's preferred strategies in terms of "hard" and "soft" power and international frameworks to respond to the US challenge. The second section then examines European perceptions of Japan as an effective partner in the past and today in dealing with US power, in terms of complementary power capabilities, values, and common interests and views of the necessary structuring of the international system. The third section then evaluates the ways in which the deepening of US–Japan alliance ties has affected European approaches to managing the trans-Atlantic alliance, US hegemony in the international system, and related economic and security issues.

This chapter concludes that Japan's "hardening" of its international role through its enhanced military capabilities and strengthening of the US–Japan alliance, and its subsequent decreased emphasis on multilateral and intra- and inter-regional balancing against the United States, has indeed in many instances hindered European strategies to manage US hegemony. Although certainly not devastating for European strategies to collectively respond to the United States, Europe is finding it harder to find common ground with Japan on issues where it is diverging strategically from the United States but where Japan is showing greater strategic convergence with the United States. Examples of this in East Asia include European strategy towards the rise of China, and potentially the engagement of North Korea, and outside the region in Iraq.

However, this situation does not hold true for all European states individually, as those converging with the United States strategically, and most notably the UK, are finding grounds for deeper and more substantial cooperation with Japan. This is especially the case on "hard" security issues. Moreover, despite the increasing strengthening of the US–Japan alliance,

there are still areas for possibly enhanced cooperation with EU as a collective whole. Japan continues to maintain a degree of strategic divergence from the United States on issues such as climate change, trade and the Middle East peace settlement, as do the EU and many individual European states, and thus there is scope for Europe–Japan cooperation on these issues. Furthermore, there are clearly areas of general convergence between the United States, Europe and Japan. Afghanistan is one illustration of this, and Iran may be another, if it continues with its nuclear programme. In this sense, a deepened US–Japan alliance may still provide opportunities for Europe–Japan cooperation and for moderating, whilst still generally cooperating with, US hegemonic behavior. Moreover, domestic political change in Japan, with the advent of the more internationally cautious Fukuda administration, made for retrenchment in ambitions for the US–Japan alliance, thus scaling back some of the growing hard power of Japan and opening up avenues for Japan–Europe cooperation. Hence, the chapter concludes that even though a changing US–Japan alliance poses difficult challenges for Japan–Europe cooperation and European approaches to US power and hegemony, nevertheless, depending on the specific issue, it may at the very least not hinder Japan–Europe cooperation, and even create promising new avenues for cooperation.

## Europe and US hegemony: soft power versus hard power

European views of US hegemony are complex and prone to contradictions and ambivalence. Europe, on the one hand, has long enjoyed close and very cooperative ties with the United States in the international system. For many of the founders of the EU project and its antecedents, US federalism has served as a model for integration. For its part, the United States has generally sought to encourage European integration as a means to stabilize this region in the postwar and post-Cold War periods; although more recently it has shown concerns that European integration has reached the point that it may challenge US power (Peterson 2004: 616–17). The EU project has arguably only been made possible through a high degree of reliance on US military hegemony and leadership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) for external protection; and, in the project's earliest stages, internal reassurance against the resurgence of German power—a process that can be termed as deepening European interdependence through dependence on the United States (Wallace 2002: 142). In turn, Europe and the United States have developed a sense of trans-Atlantic community (Hemmer and Katzenstein 2002) based on shared values of liberal democracy and an extraordinary degree of economic interdependence. In fact, the EU is perhaps already the "hegemonic" equal of the United States in terms of global economic size and influence (Baldwin, Peterson and Stokes 2003: 29).

On the other hand, though, European states have felt discomfort with dependence on US military power and hegemony, and their consequent relative political subordination, individually, or collectively in the guise of the

EU, to the United States in configuring the international system. The United States has always been the significant "Other" against which much of the construction of a European identity has taken place. During the Cold War, Europe at times attempted to portray itself as the "third force" in the international system to counter-balance US–Soviet bipolarity (Smith 2004: 19); and in the post-Cold War period, Europe has toyed with concepts of "trilateralism," that employ the EU and East Asia as regional entities hopefully capable of tying the United States into a tripolar international system and countering the US promotion of unipolarity (Hook, Gilson, Hughes and Dobson 2005: 73).

In order to promote this tripolar and multilateral vision, European states, and particularly through the agency of the EU, have sought to exploit a number of forms of power and multilateral frameworks for cooperation. The EU has developed a number of tools of "soft power", including the extensive provision of humanitarian aid and Official Development Assistance (ODA) and its self-promotion as a "development superpower" in the neighboring regions of North Africa, the Middle East, and further afield in the Caribbean, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Pacific. Europe's provision of ODA, although sharing with that of the United States an emphasis on good governance and clearly designed for strategic security purposes, has usually been characterized by conditionalities less "neo-liberal" in tone and thus promoting a more European-oriented model of economic development.

In a similar fashion, Europe has attempted to exert its "soft power" or "transformative power" (Maull 2005: 788–89) by standing as a model of liberal democracy and economy for states in Eastern and Southern Europe, and now also on the fringes of the Middle East and Europe in the shape of Turkey, seeking to accede to the EU. In part, it might be argued that Europe's development of "soft" power capabilities is a rationalization of its essentially still subordinate role to the United States and is not a real alternative to US hegemony which still deals in the real currency of military power (Smith and Steffenson 2005: 347). All the same, the European states, and the EU in particular, have laboured diligently to project an image of "civilian power" (Maull 1990/1991) to counter that of the United States as the quintessential military power.

At the same time, despite its play for civilian power status, Europe has also moved to try to augment its "hard" military power through the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) and St Malo process of 1998, under which the UK as the arch-"Atlanticist" and France as the arch-"Europeanist" military powers in Europe agreed that the EU should develop a "capacity for autonomous action, backed by credible military forces", and thus moved in the direction of beginning to reduce Europe's collective dependence on US military power (Smith 2002: 102; White 2001: 147–48). The EU has further boosted its potential military capabilities with the introduction of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Clearly, though, Europe's collective

military power capabilities outside NATO, and without the involvement of the United States, remain limited, and its chief power projection capabilities still lie with the individual state militaries of the UK and France. But even with these limited capabilities the EU has carved out an important military role in terms of conflict prevention, peacekeeping, post-conflict reconstruction, and "state-building". The EU has performed this role since 2003 in the Balkans in support of the originally US-led NATO operations, and independently on a small scale in the Congo, thus intimating an expanded, if still constrained, military role for the EU, and which has raised questions about the future viability of NATO as the chief provider of security for Europe (Menon 2004: 641–42).

In developing these forms of "soft" and "hard" power, the European states and the EU have sought to deepen their own further integration project so that Europe can stand more effectively as a collective political, economic and military pole vis-à-vis the United States (Maull 2005: 777), and also sought to reach out, in line with the tripolar and multipolar vision, to forge links with and support the region-building activities of other states as potential poles in the international system (Edwards 2005). Hence, the EU has established inter-regional relations with the Mediterranean countries though the Barcelona process since 1995, and with Asia through the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) since 1996 (Gilson 2000; Maull 2005: 786). These dialogue forums have discussed a range of political and economic issues, and placed a notable emphasis on non-traditional security issues, including: migration, drug trafficking, transnational crime and terrorism; and stressed cooperation to reinforce multilateral frameworks at the global level, including the UN.

Europe's strategy for augmenting its international presence, therefore, is seen to hinge upon the projection of predominantly "soft" power, with developing "hard" power components; a multi-dimensional view of security that stresses the interconnection between non-traditional security threats and traditional security, conflict prevention and state-building; and an emphasis on deploying power through the strengthening of Europe's own integration projects, the strengthening of other regional projects and inter-regionalism, and the strengthening of multilateral frameworks at the global level.

In practice Europe's aspirations do not always match its collective ability to act and the resultant policy outcomes. It is important to remember that Europe's will to act as a moderating influence on US hegemony has varied over time. The relationship experienced particular tensions in the "second cold war" of the late 1970s and 1980s when the Europeans increasingly looked for engagement with the Soviet bloc as against the hardened military posture of the Ronald Reagan administration; but then rebounded positively at the end of the Cold War; and has since dipped in the wake of September 11. Likewise, as noted earlier, European opinion over US hegemony is highly diverse. France's stance has traditionally remained aloof (in style, if not always in substance) from US hegemony, arguing strongly post-Iraq war for a multipolar world; the UK has argued the contrary case in favour of Europe

aligning itself around the US pole; whilst Germany drifted closer to an anti-hegemonic position following events in Iraq. Moreover, it is clear that Europe has not always played the good multilateralist (Pollack 2004): for instance, seeking military intervention in the Balkans in the 1990s without seeking UN mandates, and thus acting in marked contrast to its later avowed "internationalist" position in the run-up to the Iraq war. Europe has also often found it difficult to discover true common ground with other regions in order to make its trilateral vision function: the ASEM process, for instance, has been greatly debilitated by friction between the EU and its Asian dialogue partners over questions of human rights and the inclusion of the Myanmar in the forum (Reiterer 2002: 75).

Still, despite these important provisos, it is clear that Europe's attempts to identify itself as a civilian power stand in contradistinction to the current character of US hegemony. This contrast is made all the sharper by the practices of the Bush administration which have tended to stress the pre-eminence of military-technical solutions in addressing multi-causal security issues such as transnational terrorism; the expression of US power through pre-emptive military actions and unilateralism; and selective multilateralism in the shape of "coalitions of the willing".

## European views of Japan as a "civilian" power

Europe's status as a "civilian power" stands in contrast to and provides resources and frameworks to mediate the impact of US hegemony. At the same time, it provides a complementary basis for potential international cooperation with Japan, which also purports to share many of the same power traits as Europe.

For sure, Europe's relations with Japan have not always been cordial, or seemingly predisposed to close cooperation vis-à-vis US hegemony. In the early postwar period, Japan's client state-like association with the United States was perceived by European powers as a potential threat. Great Britain, for instance, strongly opposed the United States' sponsorship of Japan into the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) as endangering its textile industries. In much of the latter Cold War period, Japan's status as a "peril" to the European project was manifested in substantial trade friction. Japan was viewed as an economic threat due to its vigorous competition in areas of traditional European industrial strength, such as steel, shipbuilding and automobiles, and because of its tendency to negotiate bilaterally over trade with individual European Community (EC) member states rather than with the body collectively, thus indicating that it was practising a "divide and rule" policy (Hughes 2001: 61). Anti-Japanese sentiment reached a peak with accusations in the 1980s that it was using automobile production investment in the UK as a "Trojan Horse" to circumvent EC trade regulations, and the French Prime Minister Edith Cresson's extraordinary labelling in 1991 of the Japanese as "ants" and "outcasts".

Nevertheless, throughout the Cold War period, Europe and Japan began to establish the basis for closer economic and eventually political cooperation. The EC developed regular high-level consultations with Japan at the European Commission level, through parliamentary exchanges, and the establishment of the EC delegation to Japan in 1974. Japan and the EC also initiated a degree of political cooperation on issues around Europe's periphery with a joint statement in 1980s condemning Iran's seizure of the US embassy in Tehran, and shared strategic interests over Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and Poland. Europe–Japan relations then reached a new stage of maturity and "partnership" at the end of the Cold War. Japanese investment in Europe came increasingly to be seen as positive force supporting the revitalization of certain industries and furthering European integration, and the EU Commission's 1998 White Paper then argued for closer political and security relations with Japan. The EU–Japan Joint Declaration of 1991 stressed the two sides' shared principles of liberal democracy and economy; support for the UN and multilateral organization; and laid out specific areas for cooperation in the economic stabilization of post-Cold War Eastern Europe, the conservation of the environment, and tackling terrorism and transnational crime. All of these principles and issues were essentially "civilian" in nature, and promised the complementary interlocking of Europe and Japan's economic power and ODA resources, and a very different basis for cooperation from the respective military security relationships that each maintained with the United States (Gilson 2000: 121–65). Japan and Europe then reiterated these principles in the 2001 Action Plan, which further laid out a more specific agenda of cooperation in UN reform, human rights and democratization, conflict prevention and peace-building, and non-proliferation (Minstry of Foreign Affairs 2001).

In turn, this "civilian" power agenda has translated into significant policy initiatives by Japan and the EU in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and the Balkans. Japan was a founding member of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in 1990, and in the 1990s was a major donor of aid to Poland and Hungary, later to become EU accession and then member states. The EU and Japan became the major funders of the Palestinian Authority from the late-1990s onwards, thus finding common ground in their divergence from the United States' essentially "Israel-first" policy. Europe and Japan also found a common agenda for security cooperation through financial and technical support in the reconstruction of postwar Bosnia (Berkofsky 2008: 28–29).

For Europe, therefore, Japan has possessed the qualities to be an ideal "civilian power" partner to balance, if not explicitly, then at least implicitly, US dominance in the international system. This balancing role has largely taken the form of enabling Europe to engage in a number of important "civilian" political and security initiatives to strengthen its own regional integration project, to enhance its international presence around its periphery, and thus to stand more effectively as an alternative pole to that of the United States. Europe has also attached importance to Japan as a partner and anchor

for its programme to support regionalism and the growth of a third pole in East Asia to provide for a more trilateral international system. The EU has often perceived of Japan as an important mediator in the ASEM forum between itself and the East Asian states, and especially on particular technical issues for cooperation. For instance, the EU viewed Japan as a key partner through which to channel its expertise on regional monetary cooperation to East Asian states in the wake of the East Asian financial crisis (Hook, Gilson, Hughes, Dobson 2005: 300–1).

Japan, for its part, has been careful not to alienate the United States by being seen to cooperate against it with the EU. Nevertheless, in the past, cooperation with the EU has been seen as a useful mechanism to channel its "soft power" for security ends, and "trilateralism" as a potential alternative or complement to exclusive reliance on the US–Japan bilateral relationship for the projection of Japan's international presence. For instance, even the arch-bilateralist Koizumi sponsored a so-called Task Force on Foreign Relations in 2002, which argued for closer ties with the EU as part of the diversification strategy of Japan's foreign policy away from over-reliance on the United States (Berkofsky 2008: 26).

## Europe and the US–Japan alliance

If Europe has viewed Japan as a useful partner to construct Europe itself and other regions as countervailing poles to US hegemony, then the strengthening of Japan's alliance with the United States post-September 11, its declining status as a "civilian power", and its re-adherence to US unipolarity provides important challenges, but potential opportunities, for Europe–Japan international cooperation.

Europe and Japan have grounds for both divergence and convergence in their cooperation on the issue of the United States-led "war on terror" against transnational terrorism and WMD. Iraq has clearly been the most problematic issue for EU relations with the United States: the EU unable to articulate a collective and effective response to the initial US invasion of Iraq in 2003, and Europe splitting along lines of individual states' opposition to or support for the US military action. In contrast, Japan demonstrated greater strategic convergence with the United States on Iraq, expressing from the outset political "understanding", although not military support, for the invasion. Hence, in the early phases of this vital test of EU foreign policy and international cooperation outside the ambit of US bilateral alliance relationships to respond to US power, Europe and Japan found little common ground for substantive co-ordination of their diplomatic policies.

Likewise, Japan's shift towards a strengthened alliance with the United States to respond to WMD issues and its concomitant inability to more fully exploit its regional diplomatic options in East Asia has also created grounds for strategic divergence with Europe over its hopes for strengthening East Asia as an alternative regional pole. Europe since the start of the new century

has largely sought to promote engagement with North Korea as the optimum approach to resolving the nuclear crisis and the domestic human security crisis inside the North. The EU has provided financial assistance for the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation (KEDO), humanitarian assistance to respond to the North's domestic food shortages, and technical assistance to encourage economic reform; whilst a number of individual EU member states have normalized diplomatic ties with the North. Japan has clearly also sought to promote engagement with North Korea, demonstrated most dramatically by Koizumi's visits to the North in 2002 and 2004, and the stop–go persistence with normalization negotiations. However, Japan has gradually shifted to a more hard-line position on the North's nuclear programme and the issue of the abductions of Japanese citizens, and found it progressively more difficult to maintain effective engagement options with the North, culminating in its imposition of sanctions in reaction to the July missile tests and October nuclear test (Hughes 2006). In the meantime, Japan has strengthened its "hard power" to respond to the North through the upgrading of its national military capabilities, and through the enhanced operability of the US–Japan alliance, as seen in Japan's 2004 National Defence Programme Guidelines (NDPG), the conclusion of the 2005 bilateral Defence Policy Review Initiative (DPRI) (Hughes 2005; Hughes 2004), and acceleration of Ballistic Missile Defense cooperation with the United States (Hughes and Krauss 2007; Hughes 2009). Europe certainly shares Japan's and the United States' concerns over the North's threat of nuclear proliferation and has been generally supportive of scaling back engagement with the North since 2002. Nonetheless, Japan's conversion to a more "hard power" stance over the North Korea issue, coupled with the effective demise of KEDO since 2003, has narrowed the scope for Europe and Japan acting in concert as "civilian powers" to provide an alternative engagement policy to counter or complement the United States' shift to strengthened containment under the Bush administration. Indeed, the United States and Japan have at times berated Europe for what has been seen as its overly "soft" engagement with North Korea.

Europe and Japan face similar difficulties in constructing mutually supportive policies to respond to the rise of China. Certainly, Europe and Japan share strong common interests in seeking to support the peaceful political and economic integration of China into the regional and global political economies, a concern for the protection of human rights in China, and their respective foreign policies are predominantly geared towards China's engagement. Japan and the EU also launched in September 2005 a "strategic dialogue on East Asia's security environment", including discussion of China-related security matters (Berkofsky 2008: 30).

All the same, Europe and Japan have shown increasing signs of divergence in their perception of China's rise and the appropriate means with which to respond. Europe, clearly perceiving China as more an opportunity than a potential threat, given its lack of geographical proximity but deepening

economic ties, has put forward since 2003 a programme of "comprehensive strategic partnership" with China (Commission of the European Communities 2003: 3). This involves an emphasis on cooperation for the implementation of WTO agreements in China; the promotion of human rights, democracy and good governance; and environmental protection. Much of this European agenda overlaps with that of Japan, and its concern with economic cooperation and environmental ODA in China. But it is clear that Japan in recent years has found it harder to pursue this type of "civilian power" agenda towards China, and has turned increasingly to military options in order to hedge against the security risks of China's rise, and once again this has involved re-adherence to US hegemony and US military strategy in the East Asia region. Japan's strengthening of its bilateral alliance with the United States over the issue of China, therefore, creates little positive impetus for joint Europe–Japan cooperation, and in fact has actually created grounds for open discord. In June 2005, at the annual EU–Japan summit, both sides declared their common interest in developing China as a responsible and global partner, but the Japanese side also inserted in their communiqué their outright opposition to any move by the EU to lift its embargo on arms sales to China, in place since Tiananmen Square in 1989 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2005). Japan had taken particular umbrage at this potential EU initiative, believed to have been sponsored by France, as a threat to Japanese and East Asian regional security. Japan was successful, in conjunction with US protests and internal European dissension, in using the "strategic dialogue on East Asia's security environment" to convince the EU not to lift the embargo. Nonetheless, the issue demonstrated the potential divergence in approach between Europe on the one hand, and Japan and the United States on the other, vis-à-vis China (Serra 2005: 33). Moreover, the issue of the arms embargo still contains the potential to blow EU–Japan strategic cooperation wide open, if, as it seems rumoured, the EU moves to re-export arms to China in such as way that does not "upset the strategic balance in East Asia".

At the same time as potential gaps between Europe and Japan have opened up on the question of joint cooperation in responding to the US "war on terror", WMD and China, it is clear that the Europe–Japan relationship is strong enough, at enough levels, for both sides to still find areas for continued or new cooperation. Hence, the EU and Japan have found common grounds for cooperation in the reconstruction of postwar Iraq: the EU currently serving as the second largest donor after Japan to the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IFFRI) (European Commission 2005). Europe's multiple identities as a diplomatic and security actor have also meant that Japan's shift to a more "hard power" international character has created new opportunities for cooperation with some European states in Iraq. The UK in particular has been able to forge still closer security ties with Japan through the role of its forces in providing protection for the deployment of Ground Self-Defence Forces (GSDF) around Samawah in the UK-administered zone in Southern Iraq.

Europe–Japan cooperation has faced selective strategic divergence and constraints in responding to Iraq, North Korea and China. Nevertheless, these problems have not derailed joint cooperation in other areas of common interest and in reaction to the assertion of US hegemony. Europe and Japan have shown considerable and continued strategic convergence with each other, and divergence with the United States, over the issue of climate change. Europe and Japan argue strongly that their joint cooperation was in large part responsible for the Kyoto Protocol coming into force despite the US disownment of it under the Bush administration. Europe and Japan have also found common, if not wholly co-ordinated cause, in successfully opposing the United States over its imposition of protectionist steel tariffs in 2002 and over food standards for imports of beef and genetically modified (GM) foods (Yoshimatsu 2007).

Moreover, on certain issues there is also a general convergence of European, Japanese and US interests, making for strong trilateral cooperation. Although the United States' interest in state-building in Afghanistan has not been entirely consistent, it has been in strong accord with the EU, individual European allies and with Japan on the need for the reconstruction of the Afghan state and the need to employ military and economic power in this endeavour. Hence, the hope is that Afghanistan may serve as the site for the interaction of the United States', the EU's and Japan's "soft" and "hard" power capabilities. Indeed, Afghanistan might even serve as the site for the interaction of European and Japanese "hard" power if Ozawa Ichirō, the leader of the opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), were to have his way, and convert the JSDF mission to support OEF to become one supporting the International Security Force Afghanistan (ISAF) through a military ground presence engaged in reconstruction missions. Japanese policy-making opinion was clearly heavily divided over a possible Afghan mission for the JSDF. Since early 2008, Japanese government officials inched towards the possibility of enacting a permanent law for JSDF dispatch which would obviate the need for separate time-bound laws for each overseas mission, and thus avoid lengthy and divisive Diet discussions relating to Japan's international security contribution. In June 2008, Prime Minister Fukuda appeared to lean towards this option, but was hesitant fearing opposition from its own New Kōmeitō partner. But if Japan did enact such a law it could at very least lead to a new JSDF mission flying in logistical support to NATO and European military forces for peace maintenance activities.

The same story of possible strategic convergence may also apply to their reaction to Iran over the longer term. Up until early 2007, the EU—represented by France, the UK and Germany—and the United States have pursued a "good cop–bad cop" approach to Iran's nuclear programme, holding out the possibility of both diplomatic and economic incentives and military pressure as means to force it to desist. Japan has walked a middle and not entirely ingenuous line: indicating its shared desire with Europe and the United States for Iran to submit its programme to the appropriate

international safeguards, but still moving ahead with deals to exploit the Azegedan oil fields in Iran (even though it has recently cut its stake in the old field under US pressure, it still maintains a foothold in the project) (Heginbotham and Samuels 2002). If the Iran issue comes to a head, with the failure of diplomacy and increased pressure from the UN Security Council, then this may be an important issue to make or break trilateral cooperation amongst Europe, Japan and the United States. Europe in this instance may find itself closer to the United States having attempted but exhausted diplomacy with Iran. Japan may find itself isolated from both the Europeans and the United States, thereby undermining the prospect for Europe–Japan cooperation to counteract the United States' potential willingness to use force against Iran, and loosening any alliance leverage that Japan has over the United States. In the final calculation, Japan will line up with Europe and the United States to exert diplomatic pressure on Iran, but the issue will be a crucial test of the limits of Japan–Europe cooperation and Europe's ability to construct itself and others as alternate poles to US hegemony.

## Conclusion: Japan and Europe talking and moving past each other?

Europe has long eyed Japan as a potential "civilian" partner with which to augment its own regional integration designs and to boost the integration plans of other states and regions in order to provide some form of counter to unchecked US hegemony. The extent of Europe–Japan cooperation should not be over-exaggerated: this bilateral partnership and broader trilateralism have never been seen as a full substitute for the trans-Atlantic relationship but rather as a useful partial counterweight and alternative only on certain issues. Japan's reaction to the aggressive reassertion of US hegemony post-September 11 by strengthening its "hard" and bilateral alliance ties with the United States has had important implications for European strategy with regard to Japan, and, in turn, with regard to the United States. Japan's new "hard power" and strong support for the United States has created a number of difficulties for Europe–Japan cooperation in Iraq, North Korea and, perhaps most importantly over the longer term, China. But it has to be acknowledged that these difficulties are not universal for all of Europe, as other individual states can see new opportunities for cooperation with a Japan that is gradually becoming a more important military player and visible US ally. In other areas, and chiefly those that are less strictly related to military security cooperation, the strengthened US–Japan is not necessarily a bar on Europe–Japan cooperation. European and Japanese cooperation has remained strong on climate change and the management of the international trading system, and in large part this is a result of the need to cooperate in the face of US intransigence. In yet other areas, Europe–Japan–US cooperation remains strong in spite of, or because of, the strengthened US–Japan alliance, as in the case of Afghanistan.

Europe's policy-makers were most recently given a portent of one potential future course of Japan as a potential partner for international cooperation with the then Prime Minister Abe Shinzō's visit to Europe in January 2007. In the wake of North Korea's missile and nuclear tests, Abe's visit focused very much on security issues, with the new prime minister emphasizing a new Japanese willingness to cooperate with European states on security in the Middle East and Afghanistan. Abe on this trip became the first Japanese prime minister to address NATO's North Atlantic Council, and hinted that as Japan continued to investigate the implementation of a permanent law on international peace cooperation and constitutional revision it would seek to enhance its military cooperation with NATO (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2007a). Japan and the UK reconfirmed their burgeoning security cooperation originating in the Iraq conflict (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2007b). But in contrast to previous Japanese leaders who had visited Europe, Abe also conveyed much stronger ambitions for European states to reciprocate in assisting Japan's security agenda, thus adding a stronger undertone of conditionality to relations. Abe insisted on extracting promises of cooperation from European leaders in the UK, France, Germany and NATO to assist in a resolution to North Korea's abductions of Japanese citizens, and that all European states should actively implement sanctions against the North. Abe further stressed continually to European states concerns about the rise of China militarily, and that Japan would renew its quest for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

Hence, European states in January 2007 encountered a more "muscular" Japan, perhaps moving in directions with its security policy that Europe would find hard to follow fully in the future. Abe's resignation in September 2007 and his replacement by the more pragmatic Fukuda precipitated some rowing back on Japanese security ambitions and plans for the expansion of the US–Japan alliance, thus perhaps delivering a softer edge to Japan's international role. Certainly Fukuda's agenda up until the G-8 held in Japan in July 2008 focussed on cooperation with Europe in the area of climate change. Fukuda also showed a greater willingness to engage China and to mitigate security tensions, as well as to extricate Japan from its diplomatic bind over North Korea. However, Japan is unlikely to move off its long-term incremental trajectory towards "normalization" as a more assertive military power.

The key to understanding this mixed pattern of cooperation between Japan and Europe now and in the future consists of two variables. The first is the nature of European and Japanese power resources. The degree of cooperation between the two appears reliant in part on the commensurability of their "soft" and "hard" power portfolios. Europe is moving to acquire both, with still a greater emphasis on economic power. Japan, by contrast, is perhaps placing greater emphasis currently on augmenting its military capabilities. These changing power resources may create complementarities for post-conflict reconstruction and state-building, but as Europe and Japan begin to emphasize different "soft" and "hard" power resources their abilities

to act in concert may actually begin to bypass and drift past each other. Hence, Japan's increasing interest in acquiring "hard power" may unbalance the triangle of US–Europe–Japan relations, and strengthen the US–Japan side rather than strengthening the counteracting Japan–Europe side.

The second key variable is simply the nature of overlap in their common interests vis-à-vis US hegemony and the geographical proximity to their own regions. Europe and Japan have found it easier to cooperate on issues of common concern where it does not impact directly on their security, as in the Middle East or on the periphery of Europe. However, when the issue directly affects Japan's security and involves potential military conflict, then Japan has usually chosen to fall back on the alliance relationship with the United States and the prospects for Europe–Japan cooperation remain constrained, as in the case of China. It would seem that the further Japan pushes its military role and more it becomes preoccupied with its security vis-à-vis China, then this can only further limit its options to break out of this cycle by seeking cooperation with Europe as an alternative expression for its political and security identity. Similarly, Europe's options to deal with US hegemony will on the whole be constrained by the strengthening US–Japan military alliance.

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